

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA

CHIEF HEARING OFFICER DIRECTIVE

DOCKET NO. 2022-22-E ORDER NO. 2022-11-H

FEBRUARY 14, 2022

CHIEF HEARING OFFICER: David Butler

DOCKET DESCRIPTION:

Dominion Energy South Carolina, Incorporated's Informational Docket Opened Pursuant to Order No. 2021-570 Issued in Docket No. 2020-125-E Regarding the Stakeholder Process to Examine an Electricity Affordability Program for Dominion Energy South Carolina's Low-Income Customers and Related Issues

MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION:

Petition to Intervene of AARP

CHIEF HEARING OFFICER'S ACTION:

This matter comes before the Chief Hearing Officer on the Petition to Intervene of AARP in this Docket. The Petition is timely filed, and no objections to the intervention have been filed.

AARP asserts that with its nearly 38 million members in all 50 States and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands, it is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that, among other things, fights for the issues that matter most to families such as affordable utilities. AARP notes that it has more than 600,000 members in South Carolina, many of whom are residential electric customers of Dominion Energy South Carolina ("DESC" or "Company").

AARP states that its interest in this matter and its grounds for intervention relate to its intervention in the Application of Dominion Energy South Carolina, Inc. for Adjustment of Rates (Docket No. 2020-125-E). On July 2, 2021, the parties to that docket moved for entry of an order approving a comprehensive settlement agreement resolving all issues raised in that docket. The Commission approved the parties' settlement agreement by order dated July 21, 2021.

Paragraph 21 of the settlement agreement provides that "DESC commits to initiate a stakeholder process within 90 days after the Commission issues a final order approving the terms of this Settlement Agreement. The Parties to [Docket 2020-125-E] will be invited to become a member of the stakeholder group. The purpose of this stakeholder process is to examine an electricity affordability program for DESC's low-income customers and address the need for legislation to implement such a program. The electricity affordability program may provide for: (1) an affordable payment program that provides a discount to

eligible customers on their monthly bills, or caps their monthly bills based on income; (2) an arrearage crediting or arrearage management program. DESC will open a docket at the Commission and all information from stakeholder meetings will be filed in such docket. In this process, DESC will expressly evaluate a Percentage of Income Payment Program and Arrearage Crediting Program modeled after those offered by Dominion East Ohio.” This Docket has been opened.

On December 14, 2021, DESC and other parties, including AARP, conducted an initial stakeholder meeting during which they discussed options for an electricity affordability program and a timeline for submission of comments and feedback concerning the proposals discussed.

To ensure that AARP can submit relevant information to the Commission concerning the stakeholder process and that it also receives timely notification of filings, AARP states that it seeks to intervene in the above-referenced docket. According to AARP, intervention will facilitate AARP’s advocacy on behalf of residential electric customers, including those over age 50, who devote a higher percentage of their total spending than do other age groups toward residential energy costs. AARP notes that many older consumers also have special needs and safety concerns about their access to electric service. As a result, AARP believes that these customers have a substantial interest in the outcome of the stakeholder process.

AARP asserts that its specific interest in this proceeding will not be adequately represented by other parties. AARP believes that its intervention and participation in this proceeding would serve the public interest and wishes to become a party to this case for all purposes. Moreover, AARP states that it can assure that its intervention would not unduly delay the proceedings nor prejudice the rights of any other party.

After it has been determined that the Petition to Intervene has been timely filed, the next question for the Commission is to determine whether or not the petitioning party or parties have clear factual support or grounds for the proposed intervention. S.C. Regs. 103-825A(3) requires that parties filing a Petition to Intervene in a matter pending before the South Carolina Public Service Commission must set forth clearly and concisely:

- (a) The facts from which the nature of the petitioner's alleged right or interest can be determined;
- (b) The grounds of the proposed intervention;
- (c) The position of the petitioner in the proceeding.

From the discussion and assertions in AARP’s Petition and its assertions, this Hearing Officer holds that AARP has successfully satisfied all of the criteria for intervention stated in the Regulation. The Petitioner’s interest in these matters can clearly be discerned, as can the grounds for the intervention, and the Petitioner’s position in the proceeding. Further, the Petition to Intervene was timely filed and there are no objections to the intervention. Accordingly, the Petition to Intervene of AARP is hereby granted in this Docket. This ends the Chief Hearing Officer’s Directive.